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How and why...

The Central Intelligence Agency, which likes silence, has gone to court in Baltimore to see if one of its agents can keep quiet in a defamation case.

The agent, Juri Raus, has charged that fellow-Estonian émigré Eerik Heine of Toronto is a Soviet spy. Mr. Raus, a traffic engineer in the United States Bureau of Roads, acted under CIA orders.

Mr. Heine, in December, 1964, brought suit for \$110,000 against Mr. Raus for slander. The CIA has since identified Mr. Raus in court as one of its own secret agents.

Now it has asked the court to grant "absolute immunity" to Mr. Raus for his statements.

The Supreme Court has held that federal employees have immunity from lawsuits if acting within their office. But this raises questions. Does the present case fall in that category? Must the charges the CIA made through its agent, Mr. Raus, be proved? Or can he remain mute, leaving Mr. Heine no legal recourse?

That is the issue now.